



LIFESHAPE

PRAYER & DISCIPLESHIP

2 chronicles 7:14

COVENANT

BLOCK FIVE

PSALMS

89:34

My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing which has gone out of my lips.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. God is a covenant God.
2. Covenant says, "Your good at my expense."
3. We should choose our covenants carefully.
4. What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

God is a covenant God. In today's world the word covenant has come to be recognized as more of a legal term rather than a spiritual practice. Since it was God who first created covenant it will do us good to look at the Bible's definition and discover how God intends for us to practice this New Creation responsibility.

When the Bible speaks about covenants it is talking about a promise made by one person involving another or an agreement made between two parties. Covenant is personal and it involves a commitment backed up by a vow. A vow is a solemn promise that a person makes before God. The Bible instructs us to not make or take our covenant vows lightly ... God doesn't! When God is asked to witness a covenant, He takes it seriously.

When you make a vow to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. It is better to say nothing than to make a promise and not keep it.

ECCLESIASTES

5:4-5

It is important we not promise to do something which we do not want to do or that we have no intention of doing. However, if we vow ... we must realize that God expects for us to keep that which we have promised and perform our covenant responsibilities.

God does not discourage commitments, in fact He does

right the opposite. God encourages commitments and He also encourages us to keep the commitments we make.

Let's explore some of the things the Bible has to say about covenants:

Covenants can be:

- Unilateral Covenants (Genesis 17:4; Hebrews 6:13&14)
- Bilateral Covenants (Genesis 31:44)
- Conditional Covenants (Deuteronomy 28)
- Unconditional Covenants (Judges 11:30-36)
- Covenants offered for acceptance (Matthew 11:28)
- Covenants withdrawn before acceptance (Luke 17:27)
- Some covenants can be voided by authorities (Numbers 30:3ff)
- Covenants can be broken (Psalms 55:20; Matthew 19; 1Co 7)
- Covenants can be dissolved by God in His time (Matthew 19:6)

One might suggest that there is nothing special about a covenant. They seem no different than the contracts and other agreements we are used to seeing all the time. I beg to differ ...

You see a covenant is different than a contract in the very nature of a covenant. The nature of a contract implies,

"I am going to protect myself against you ... it's my good at your expense ... I will if you will ... and if you don't you're going to pay and I will expose you for what you are!"

However the covenant nature God offers to us and intends us to enjoy with others says,

"I am going to give myself to you ... it's your good at my expense ... I will even if you won't ... and even if you don't, I am not going to hurt you, expose you or make you pay."

Let's take a look at the well studied covenant of David and Jonathan:

Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

1 SAMUEL *18:1-4*

Jonathan's motivation for covenant was love ... a love which demanded action. Jonathan so loved that he gave:

- His Robe – This elevated David from shepherd boy to prince ... covenant places us on equal footing with the right to stand together.
- His Armor – Jonathan did not protect himself against David but rather was more interested in David being protected. He gave David his sword, his bow, and his belt.
- Note: David had earlier refused the armor of King Saul but here he accepts the armor of Jonathan.
- We are not meant to be in covenant with everyone. Covenant is special and must be meaningful to be covenant.

God joins people together first for what they can give to the relationship, not merely for what they can get.

Someone who approaches relationships based on the thought of "What can I get out of this" or "What can they do for me" is missing the boat. Selfish acts do not a covenant make or keep.

Some covenants are meant to last a lifetime and beyond!

